



**POLICE
LIFE**

THE SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE MAGAZINE



MARCHING TO THE BEAT

IN FRANCE AND SWITZERLAND

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4 EDITOR'S NOTE
6 FRANCE, ALBERTVILLE MUSIQUES MILITAIRES
14 THE ZURICH TATTOO
22 A LIFE OF MUISC
24 MEET THE MAESTRO



Editor's Note

I used to play the accordion but stopped after I left the varsity. When I led the Combined Singapore Police Force (SPF) Band to Albertville and Zurich in July 2013, the trip rekindled my memory of being a carefree student who was oblivious to everything except staying true to playing my part well in a musical group. This is indeed the spirit I saw in members of the Combined SPF band in my 10-day trip with them to France and Switzerland. They were very committed and very passionate. Every performance was treated with pride by every member of the contingent.



It was a very meaningful trip. I felt very privileged and honoured to be their leader. The friendship built with many of them and the many inspiring moments during their performance will remain a very precious chapter of my life.

Many people may not know that our Police Band was established 88 years ago in 1925, and it is one of the oldest bands in Singapore. It started off as a 33-bandsmen formation regimental marching band. Today, it comprises 75 police musicians, including the Women's Police Pipes & Drums.

Many people may also not be aware that it is our international reputation as one of the finest musical groups among the police forces in Asia that led to us being invited to perform, for the second time, at the Albertville International Military Musical Festival which was held from 4 – 8 July 2013. And for the first time, we were also invited to perform at the Zurich Police Musical Festival - a biennial Zurich Tattoo - from 9 to 13 July 2013.

The 66 officers from the Band, the Women's Police Pipes & Drums, the Gurkha Contingent Pipes & Drums and the Lion Dance Group from the Police Dog Unit have lived up to the SPF's reputation as the Force for the Nation, spreading the Force's good reputation far and wide to these two European nations. Their performances were received with cheers and huge applause from the audiences. They were indeed the stars.

Music can be made a very significant driving force in enhancing the good reputation of the SPF. It is known to be more powerful than the spoken word. It can arouse a desired response from any and all listeners. I see the SPF Band as a medium ready to facilitate communications, bringing the SPF reputation to greater heights; more so in this fast moving digital world that we are now in.

Vision aside, join the contingent in the following pages as the officers recollect their experience.

On top of that, *Police Life* gets up close and personal with Deputy Superintendent of Police Amri Bin Amin, Director of Music for the SPF Band and Station Inspector Nor Aisha Binte Dasuni, the instructor and a seasoned bagpiper with more than 25 years of musical experience with the SPF Women Police Pipes & Drums.

AC Ng Guat Ting
Director Public Affairs Department
Head of Delegation
The Combined Band of the Singapore Police Force

¹ A Show Band refers primarily to marching bands geared towards crowd entertainment, and perform outdoors. A Show Band plays cover versions of popular songs

France, Albertville Musiques Militaires

*By SSGT Ahllima-D/O Sinnakamu, Musician, Training Command and ST Helmi Mohamed Eusofe,
Chief Musician, Training Command
Photos by ST Helmi Mohamed Eusofe*

The 38^{eme} Festival International de Musiques Militaires, or the 38th International Festival of Military Bands, is the oldest Military Tattoo in Albertville, France. It was an honour that the Organising Committee of the Albertville International Military Music Festival for the event invited the Singapore Police Force Combined Band to participate in the Festival from 3 July to 8 July 2013.

This was the second invitation. In Year 2000, the organising committee had in fact also invited the Women Police Pipes & Drums (WPPD) to take part in the same Festival. Back then, the 30-strong WPPD contributed a range of Scottish tunes as well as Highland dances during that trip.

The Singapore Police Combined Band contingent, comprising the Singapore Police Force Band (SPFB), WPPD and the Gurkha Contingent Pipes & Drums (GCPD), was led by Assistant Commissioner of Police Ng Guat Ting, and performed under the baton of Director of Music, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Amri Bin Amin.

Participants of the prestigious Music Festival





included bands such as the Military Music of North Finland, Orchestra of the Republic of Yakutia Saka from Russia, Fanfare Mether Bursa from Turkey, Band of the Royal Belgian Waders, the Bersaglieri di Orzinuovi Band from Italy and French's homegrown bands - the 27th Mountain Infantry Battalion and Armed Forces Music Paratroopers.

3 July - We Continue To Travel

Mr Andrea Beck, a representative from the Tattoo Committee received us at the Zurich International Airport. From the Airport, we took a coach and continued our journey to our accommodation destination at LEP Du Grand ARC in Albertville. It was after a 4-hour journey, and not forgetting the 12-hour flight, we finally arrived. We were tired but were well compensated by the beautiful scenery and good company of all.

4 July – The Official Welcome & Performances At The Retirement Homes

The next morning, we were warmly hosted to a welcome reception at the Maison du Tourisme du Pays d'Albertville l'Arpege by the President of the Organising Committee, Mr. Alexandre Dalla Mutta. Mr. Alexandre Dalla Mutta, The President of the Organising Committee through a translator warmly welcomed us and unreservedly encouraged us to enjoy our moments in France; their food, culture and music.

“This town is very well known for the cultural exchanges. This is one of the reasons (for us) to be together and to create this exchange of culture in the people.”



France, Albertville Musiques Militaires



And in return, our Head of Delegation for Singapore, Assistant Commissioner of Police Ng Guat Ting, appreciated, on behalf of the Contingent, with gratitude,

“I would like to thank all of you for giving us the opportunity to travel all the way from Asia, Singapore, to this place. And, indeed, we are very honoured and very grateful that we have been invited to this particular cultural show. On behalf of my delegation, we have, all in, 67 of us, would like to thank you and express our gratitude for the invitation.”

On that day, we visited and performed at

two Retirement Homes, namely, Residence St. Sebastien and Maison De Sante Claude Leger.

The majestic lion was the theme of our performance. Lions from a Chinese lion dance troupe led our band in a showcase of Singapore’s various ethnic groups. Our band performed various songs including The Lion Sleeps Tonight.

Another highlight of our performance was a percussion section solo, demonstrating drum beats with various ethnic drums: the Chinese Drums, the Malay Kompang, the Indian Dhol and various western drums.

We introduced our Singapore culture featuring the Chinese, Malay, Indian and Eurasian dancers showcasing the different races working together in Singapore.

After performing, we mingled with the elderly and engaged in conversations and photo-taking. The residents were particularly fascinated by the costumes of the Lion and the dancers.

At Maison De Sante Claude Leger, an elderly member of the home took over the baton from our Director of Music. We were all amused. In the name of fun, we went along with SSgt Sidek initiating a dance and playing the Dhol.

Everyone enjoyed listening to the European tunes we played with the bagpipes. Many sang, hummed and clapped along with the pipe tune 'Barren Rocks are Piping Hot'. The real treat for them was to see the dancers emerged from their inconspicuous positions for the cultural segment. Some of the residents even danced alongside the dancers. Many were dazzled by the richness and colour of the costumes worn by the dancers and the Lion Dance duo.

We hope we have added another beautiful page in the life of the senior citizens.



France, Albertville Musiques Militaires

5 July – Street Marches & Concert

The Street March was led by first-time Drum Major Staff Sergeant (SSgt) Salimin. After the performance, we headed to Soutiras Square for light refreshments and photo-taking with bands from other nations.

That night, it was our first concert at the Dome theatre, albeit a slight glitch delaying our performance. We kept our spirits up. The audience was obviously impressed. As expected, the dance item tied with the Lion's appearance and its playfulness brought the entertainment level a notch up. The solo pieces performed by Sergeant Raziz, SSgt Nurdyana, Station Inspector (SI) Nor Aisha and Senior Staff Sergeant Zulkiflee were greatly appreciated judging by the audiences' enormous applause.

6 July – More Street Marches

The host, Mr. Alexandre Dalla Mutta, threw a welcome reception at Savoie on the fourth day. He praised the participating

bands' performances thus far, and attributed the success of the Albertville International Military Music Festival to its popularity and following the rhythm of World Music. This was followed by another welcome speech from the Mayor of Albertville, Philippe Masure. Below is an excerpt from their speeches.

The President of the Organising Committee (through a translator)

“The International Military Music Festival is about the cultural exchanges across different nations and also to keep alive the spirit of harmony across different cultures and music. I hope you keep great memories of Albertville.”

The Mayor of Albertville (through a translator)

“We are very lucky to have such beautiful delegations with us. Albertville has always been a city of cultural exchanges, tolerance and openness.”





I would like to thank the members of the Organising Committee and first, is President Alexandre Dalla Mutta. The International Festival of Military Music is a festival of tolerance and openness to different cultures. Yesterday we've enjoyed beautiful music and I'm sure we will, again, enjoy such amazing music today and tomorrow. I wish you all a beautiful festival and I hope you all will keep great memories of it."

After sightseeing and photo-taking in Savoie, we started our second Street March in Albertville's City Centre. We spent the evening making preparations for the first Tattoo performance. We were excited. Our stupendous performance drew praises from our counterparts from other bands.



7 July – Performance & Fun

We played at two more street marches at the vicinity of the Gare Routiere d' Albertville (the Albertville Train Station).

Thereafter, we proceeded to Olympique Halle for our last Tattoo performance in Albertville. The liaison officer attached to us, Mr Andrea D'Erme, shared [gathered from the spectators] that a strong British influence was apparent in the Singapore Police Force Combined Band, along with our assimilation

of the various Asian cultures. This made the Band stand out as an entity.

During the post Tattoo dinner, we had fun with members of other bands at the Salle De La Pierre Du Roy. We sang and cheered during our last night in Albertville. The band sang *Chan Mali Chan* and did *Yam Seng* together with other bands. We also had meaningful conversation with other bands exchanging information about one another's culture and history.



8 July – To Zurich

On the final day at Salle De La Pierre Du Roy, we set off early for our next performance destination in Zurich, Switzerland.

Along the journey, we were very encouraged when our Director of Music DSP Amri Amin gave us perfect score, **“You have done good work in Albertville and I should say I would give a 10 out of 10 for this round. I hope you continue and I stress on the importance of practice and hard work. We may have planned adequately but in all circumstances, we must always be prepared to make necessary changes due to unforeseen circumstances. For the senior Bandsmen, I am sure this is another entry into your career dossier but for my juniors, please take this as a learning experience. Officers, I am very happy with your commitment and professionalism so keep it up and finish the job efficiently.”** 🇨🇦 #



The ZURICH TATTOO

*By SSGT Muhammad Ridzuan Bin Rosli, Training Command and SI Helmi Mohamed Eusope, Chief Musician,
Training Command
Photos by SI Helmi Mohamed Eusope*

The Zurich Tattoo, previously known as the Zurich Police Tattoo, started in 1981 and has grown into a permanent fixture in Zurich's rich cultural and performing arts calendar.

For the first time in its history, it was held at the oldest school in Zurich - the Liguster at Oerlikon, Zurich.

The Singapore Police Force Combined Band (SPF Band), comprising officers from the Singapore Police Force Band, Women Police Pipes & Drums (WPPD) and the Gurkha Contingent Pipes & Drums (GCPD), performed at this prestigious Tattoo from 9 to 13 July 2013.

Featuring bands from England, Jordan, Mexico, Sweden and Switzerland, the tattoo allowed the SPF Band to promote the SPF brand through music at the world stage.

8 July – Settling In

Arriving at Zurich after a six-hour bus ride, Director of Music, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Amri Amin, encouraged us to uphold the high standards we had set in Albertville, France the week before.

After dinner on the first night, we plunged straight into rehearsal to familiarise ourselves with a different environment. This arena was very different from in Albertville. It was now in the open, meaning the

sound projection would differ and we would also be subjected to weather uncertainties.

9 July – Starting Notes

We rehearsed intensively throughout. We were to play popular pieces like "I Dream a Dream", "Buretanz", the Switzerland National Anthem and marching off with "Radetsky March" and "Scotland the Brave".

The music festival was officially declared open at the Zurich City Centre, marked with two rounds fired by traditional musketmen. There was a street march at the event which was officiated by the Zurich City Mayor, Ms Corine Mauch, the Zurich Commissioner of Police, Mr Richard Wolff and the Zurich Tattoo Chairman, Mr Andre Beck. Below is an excerpt of their speeches:

"It is my honour to have all of you here, in Zurich, to add more colour and vibrancy to the performing arts scene. Zurich, being a multi-cultural city, welcomes all of you and we look forward to seeing what you have in store for us," declared Ms Mauch in her opening address.

"I am looking forward to a great show for this latest instalment of the Zurich Tattoo. Having bands from various countries and continents, it brings me great pleasure in welcoming all of you to Zurich." - Mr Richard Wolff, Zurich Commissioner of Police



Special Constable (SC) Low Wei Hao, who was chosen to lead the band with the bass drum, cherished the experience. **“I am honoured to be given the opportunity to represent my country and the SPF even though I have been serving my National Service in the band for only six months. It is a real eye-opener, marching through the streets of a foreign land, representing my country,”** he said.

10 July - Awaking the Sleeping Lion

The first tattoo show began with an opening featuring fanfare trumpets and trombones, with players from every participating band forming the 17 fanfare players. The SPF Band was represented by Station Inspector (SI) Ghazali Achim, SI Hakim Ramle, Senior Staff Sergeant (SSSgt) Mohammed Zulkiffli Selamat, Staff Sergeant (SSgt) Muhammad Ridzuan Rosli, Sergeant (Sgt) Alam Nasir, Sgt Muhammad Safiyan Suwandi, Corporal (Cpl) Hasyim Rostom and Cpl Abdul Latiff. Having the most representatives for the fanfare despite being the smallest band in the tattoo reflected the high regard that the organisers held for the SPF Band.

“To play for the fanfare trumpeters for the first time and in a foreign country made me proud to

be representing Singapore and the SPF Band. Most of the performers were impressed with our high standards. Although for most of us it was the first time playing the pieces, we played the fanfare with a solid and full tone,” said Sgt Muhammad Safiyan Suwandi.

The eager crowd easily numbered a thousand. When it was our turn, the SPF Band marched in towards the arena with pride. Led by Head Music Development, Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Sulaiman Abdul Wahab, the SPF Band began its segment with a fanfare from an arrangement of the popular song, “The Lion Sleeps Tonight”, arranged by ASP Sulaiman himself.

Towards the end of the arrangement, SSgt Anthony Peh and Sgt Loh Zhi Wei, on loan from the Singapore Police Force K-9 unit’s lion dance troupe, entered

the arena and enthralled the crowd with a lion dance routine.

Sgt Raziz, followed up with a saxophone jazz solo and a lullaby, which made the “lion” fall asleep.



The percussion section of the SPF Band, led by SC Low on the bass drum, then presented the crowd with a unique cultural drum-line. Beginning with a loud beat to wake the sleeping “lion”, the SPF drum-line used ethnical drums such as the Chinese Drums, Malay Kompang, Indian Dhol and a set of toms, to represent the Eurasian community.

The audience was clapping to the beat of the rhythm. At the end of the solo, the SPF Band’s percussion section was given a standing ovation by the audience.





The SPF Band then thrilled the audience with an arrangement by the SPF Band's Director of Music, "When the Pipers Play".

This piece showcased the WPPD and GCPD bagpipers, with a solo by WPPD bagpiper SI Nor Aisha Dasuni accompanied by SSSgt Sergeant Emiliah Senin on vocals and backed by the SPF Band.

After the song, the SPF Band continued to impress the audience with "A Cultural Dance Medley", arranged by the SPF Band's Director of Music. Showcasing Chinese, Malay, Indian and Eurasian dances and rhythms, the piece is based on the popular national song, "Singapura, Oh Singapura", a tune written with Malay lyrics, arranged to be sung in English.

In this arrangement, the SPF Band dancers, SI Normawati, SSSgt Mariyani Sulong and SSSgt Emiliah Senin, SSgt Nurashikin Daud and Sgt Priya Vamen and Sgt Radin Surina, along with the lion troupe, danced to the rhythm and beats played on the various ethnical drums.

The Band received resounding applause, cheers and a standing ovation. For the Band's exit march, it

marched into block with the Polis Republik Singapura March. ASP Sulaiman then led the Band out of the arena with "Das Lieben".

The show ended with a combined performance for the closing ceremony.

After the performance, SSgt Julaimi Jamali observed that other bands were extremely impressed with bass drummer SC Low, who enticed the crowd with a variety of beats, while still keeping a steady, solid beat for the band. SSgt Julaimi also noted that, **"There are newer bands coming up with higher standards of performance with a variety of different rhythms. The SPF Band now sounds more solid, complementing its colourful ethnical performance with a bigger and better sound."**

11 July - A Day of Many Firsts

We took the public transport to the performance venue, the Zurich City Centre, in our ceremonial uniform.

"In all my years of performing in music tattoos

with the SPF Band, this is the first time that we were required to take public transport, in our ceremonial uniform, to the performance venue. This unique experience presented the SPF Band with an opportunity to interact with the members of public in Switzerland,” said SI Colin Chee.

“Many of the people I spoke to were impressed with our turnout and bearing, stating how it reflects upon Singapore that is already world-renowned for its efficiency and cleanliness. The feedback from the public made me extremely proud to be representing Singapore and the Singapore Police Force Band,” he added.

The greater interaction between the bands and the public was indeed one of the aims of letting the performers travel via the Zurich public transportation system, according to Mr Andre Beck.

The SPF Band thrilled the lunch time audience with a wide array of songs from “Jive up the Pipes”, “Postcards from Singapore”, “When The Pipers Play”, “Barren Rock is Piping Hot”, “A Cultural Dance Medley” and “Nightingale”, arranged by SSSgt Mohd Zulkiffli Selamat featuring him playing a solo on the recorder.

His excitement was barely containable. “This is the first time that I am playing a solo piece overseas. Furthermore, recorders are rarely used in a military band setting. Surely, the audience did not expect such an instrument to be played and accompanied by a military band and bagpipers. The recorder imitates the sound of a thin whistle and it was my personal dream to play a recorder solo piece. Given this opportunity, I am truly honoured to be able to represent Singapore,” said SSSgt Mohd Zulkiffli.

The officers were in high spirits as their performances had thus far garnered very positive feedback.

This performance was an unforgettable experience for ASP Sulaiman, who led the band as a Drum Major for the first time. “I had the shock of my life when I was given the task to lead the Band as a drum major as I’ve had no experience whatsoever in drum majoring. To be honest, I had never imagined myself attempting to carry the mace. However, I took the challenge in my stride to prove to my men that impossible is nothing. This experience has led

me to face and overcome the hurdles in mastering the art of mace work, which is no easy feat. The sense of satisfaction in leading the band for the display is tremendous.”

12 July - Praises During Official Ease

After almost nine days of working hard, we were finally given an opportunity to do a spot of sight-seeing around Zurich. We were pleasantly surprised when some members of the public recognised our officers and told them just how impressed they were by their performances.

“I was at a tourist attraction called the ‘Top of Zurich’ where I was having a cup of hot chocolate when the waitress from the café asked if I was



from the Singapore Police Force Band. She told me that she was extremely impressed with the band, showing off the different cultures while being accompanied by a band that is of a very high standard. It was a very proud moment for me as the band's hard work was worth it. We were ambassadors not only representing the Singapore Police Force, but also our country and it was pleasing to know that people thought highly of us!" said SSgt Siti Nurkhairiyah Anuar.

Recharged after the break, we did our third tattoo show at night. After the show, a farewell party was held instead of the last day as one of the bands had to leave Zurich immediately.

The various heads of delegation from Switzerland, Mexico, England, Sweden, Jordan and Singapore

exchanged gifts as a mark of friendship and appreciation of one another's contributions towards music. The organisers also awarded the SPF Band with a commemorative plaque signifying their appreciation for the band's participation in the Zurich Tattoo.

13 July - The Best Is Yet to Be

The last day of the SPF Band's overseas trip was the busiest. We had a street march in the late morning, a tattoo show in the afternoon and the final tattoo show in the evening.

We took the tram to reach the street parade venue. However, due to a road closure, the street parade officers had to walk almost 900 metres from the tram



stop to the starting point of the street parade. Though it was relatively tiring for us, we were in high spirits as everyone we walked past recognised the SPF Band. A passer-by even said, “Majulah Singapura” when the band walked towards the starting point.

The SPF Band marched with pride in the street parade, with the crowd cheering in recognition of the unique blend of the SPF Band and appreciating the music that we played. We certainly felt a step closer to realising our vision, “To be a World Renowned Police Band”.

We performed our first afternoon show of the trip. The humid continental climate in Zurich was challenging for some of us especially our Muslims officers who were fasting.

However, we overcame that challenge with distinction. The SPF Band showcased our high level of professionalism with an astounding performance.

Glowing Tributes

After almost ten days in foreign lands, we were looking forward to ending the last show on a high note before going home.

As with the previous shows, the SPF Band showcased the culture of various ethnic groups, along with the formation displays with pride and confidence. The SPF Band’s segment ended with the audience standing, clapping and stamping their feet to the beat of the bass drum.

After the finale, we were humbled by the praises heaped on us. Ms Elsa-Marie Fåglefelt, a player from the Swedish Navy Band, felt that we were **“by far the best display band in this tattoo”** as our **“show was filled with colours and rich cultural heritage, which was extremely entertaining!”**





Mr Thomas Klaus Wagner, a member of the audience, had even taken the extra effort to catch our performance. **“I have seen the SPF Band perform in Magdeburg, Germany last year, and I was very impressed. When I heard that you would be performing again in Zurich, I took leave to take a 4-hour drive from Munich. I must say, it was well worth it! The SPF Band never fails to entertain with quality music and display. I loved the cultural aspect of the performance and the lion was just the icing on the cake! I am glad to have had the opportunity to watch the SPF Band again and will be eagerly looking forward to your next performance here in Europe!”** he said.

Another glowing review came from Mr Andrea D’Erme, representative of the Zurich Tattoo. **“The Singapore Police Force Band is very unique. It is obvious that your country has British influence. But to be able to create a fusion between the British heritage, the multi-cultural and ethnical groups and create a performance display out of it, is just exemplary. I have been around the world to see many bands and other performing groups showcase their talents and I can confidently say that the SPF Band is the only band in the world that is able to create this fusion and make it work beautifully.”** 🇸🇬



A LIFE *of* MUSIC

By SC (NS) Mohammad Noh Iskandar and ASP (NS) Mohamed Sayadi Bin Mohamed Nor

Loyalty is a value held firmly by Station Inspector (SI) Nor Aisha Binte Dasuni, who has been with the Singapore Police Force (SPF) for 32 years. The 50-year-old bagpipes instructor joined the SPF on 1 September 1981 and has been with the SPF Women Police Pipes & Drums (WPPD) for the majority of her service after serving in Radio Division and Tanglin Police Division for five years. *Police Life* caught up with the music enthusiast and found out more about the officer who lives her passion.

Did you have any musical background prior to joining the WPPD?

I have always loved music and I used to play the guitar, Chinese flute and harmonica during my school days. I never had any formal music lessons but that did not stop me from picking up the skills from my friends.

Why did you join the WPPD?

My interest in music steered me towards applying for a position in the WPPD. I knew that the instruments played were different from what I was used to but my passion for music in general guided me towards pursuing this path.

I had no prior knowledge of playing the bagpipes and had to pick it up from scratch but I had seniors and instructors who were very helpful and before long, I managed to master the instrument. I also learnt to play the trombone in the police band but the bagpipe has always been my primary

instrument.

Which performances were the most memorable for you?

I would have to list three of such performances. The first was during my early years in the band. I performed for the then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. It was a nerve-wrecking experience as it was one of my first public performances. I had to perform a solo in front of the Prime Minister but the euphoria after completing the performance was indescribable

The second was the performance during the Police Annual Dinner at the Istana for our fifth President, the late Mr Ong Teng Cheong. It was especially memorable because I had to perform a solo at the roof of the Istana. With the Singapore flag flying, that was a moment which I always cherish.

Another performance which I will never forget was when we performed to welcome Queen Elizabeth during her visit to Singapore in 1989. We were all in awe when we met her Majesty and counted our blessings for the opportunity to perform in her presence.

Could you share your experiences during any overseas performances?

I would have to say that the Edinburgh Military Tattoo in 1991 was of great significance to the women officers of the WPPD as we were performing in Scotland, the home of the bagpipes.



The Edinburgh Tattoo is definitely a once in a lifetime event which I will never forget but the significance of local performances such as during the Police Day Parade and Police Annual Dinner does not in any way pale in comparison to the Tattoo. Although I participated in them annually, the events never fail to invoke pride in me for the SPF. The moment I march in, it strengthens my sense of belonging with the SPF family.

Speaking of family, you have been in the band for such a long time. Would it be a stretch to describe the band as your second family?

Definitely not. The band has always been and will always be my second family. I have made some very good friends in the band, many of whom have retired and I see it as my responsibility to guide the younger officers and ensure that they have the same positive experiences as I did when I was serving in the band.

In your opinion, what is the significance of the WPPD to the SPF?

Besides our main function in parades and ceremonies, the WPPD also plays an important role in promoting the SPF brand. Often, during our performances both locally and overseas, many foreign police officers and members of the public approach us to find out more about the SPF. Therefore it is important for us to project the correct image of SPF and put it in good stead. 🇸🇬

It was one of the highlights of my career as the Edinburgh Military Tattoo was the pinnacle stage of performance for military bands. Currently, the Tattoo is televised in 30 countries with a 100 million home viewership and 217,000 live spectators.

What are your thoughts on the differences in performing locally and overseas?



Meet the Maestro

By Charissa Tan, Home Team News, Ministry of Home Affairs
Photos by SI Helmi Mohamed Eusope

With more than 120 music performances marked on his calendar annually, Deputy Superintendent Amri Bin Amin knows what works and what doesn't when it comes to leading his band. Home Team News met up



with this musical whiz who candidly shared his joy and passion as the Music Director of the Singapore Police Force Band and what it's like to lead the SPF band to take part in prestigious military tattoos in Edinburgh and Zurich.

The guitar, bass, piano, saxophone and clarinet... these are only some of the instruments Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Amri Bin Amin is adept with.

Not that we were expecting anything less from the Director of Music of the Singapore Police Force (SPF) Band, who has been with the band for the past 32 years.

“I joined the Force back then because I wanted a meaningful job where I could the serve the nation. At the same time, I have always had a passion for music since young,” said the 52-year-old, who joined as a Police Constable at Central Police Division in 1978.

Two years later, he would join the SPF Band as a flutist.

“I definitely made the right choice to join SPF because it marries my passion to serve the nation with my passion for music. It's a blessing because not many of us can boast of such an opportunity.”

As Director of Music for the SPF Band, DSP Amri manages the SPF Band and the Women Police Pipes & Drums, is the go-to person for music protocol for all major Police ceremonies and functions, and conducts music for State and major Home Team events.

While all SPF bandsmen are full-time musicians, as regular Police Officers, they are also subject to front-line policing duties.

Like many of the earlier musicians for the SPF Band, DSP Amri had no formal music education when he joined as a flutist.

His commitment and passion for music were recognised and supported by SPF, and he was even awarded the Singapore Public Service Commission scholarship to study at Kneller Hall of the Royal Military School of Music in the United Kingdom in 1993.

During his time in the UK, the budding classical musician received several awards for his compositions and arrangements—The Somerville Award, The Tomlinson Award and The Commandant Award—before DSP Amri officially received his Bachelor of Arts (Music) from Kingston University in 1996.

Today, Police officers who are keen to join the SPF band

need to be proficient at reading music scores, and also preferably be able to play an instrument.

The requirements are more targeted now because today the SPF combined band performs not only for major Police events such as Police Day Parades, but is often invited for military tattoos held all over the world. The original meaning of military tattoo was a military drum performance, but was subsequently referred to army displays.

It has currently evolved to be a stand-alone festival of elaborate show pieces performed by military bands, often with thousands of enthusiastic viewers in audience.

Interestingly enough, the SPF band often receives requests for their multi-racial dance item which features the Chinese, Malay, Indian and Eurasian dances, topped off with a Chinese Lion dance finale.

“The reaction to our items is often overwhelming! The organisers frequently requested for our lion dance... it is an art performance which we fuse with our music,” shared DSP Amri.

The 53-year-old recalls the thrill and intensity of the SPF Combined Band practising the pieces for the tattoo finale with many other international military bands—a feat achieved with less than 10 hours of practice.

“For me, my most fulfilling experience is to be an ambassador representing Singapore in these international tattoos and concerts; some of the memorable events include the Adelaide International Tattoo, Bremen Tattoo, and German International Tattoo,” said the SPF veteran.

“The feeling of being appreciated by millions of viewers both in the performing arena and via television broadcast is incredible and indescribable as we continue our efforts to promote the SPF brand and Singapore on the international stage.” 🇸🇬



